

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of the application are respectfully requested in view of the amendments and remarks herewith, which place the application into condition for allowance. The present amendment is being made to facilitate prosecution of the application.

I. STATUS OF THE CLAIMS AND FORMAL MATTERS

Claims 1-3, and 5-15 are pending in this application. Claims 1, 10 and 11, which are independent, are hereby amended. Claim 4 has been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter. Support for this amendment is provided throughout the Specification as originally filed. No new matter has been introduced. Changes to claims are not made for the purpose of patentability within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. §101, §102, §103, or §112. Rather, these changes are made simply for clarification and to round out the scope of protection to which Applicants are entitled.

II. REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. §102(b)

Claims 1-15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as allegedly anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,918,222 to Fukui, et al.

Claim 1 recites, *inter alia*:

“...wherein the attributes of the first information are weighted as a function of a relevance to the topic, and

wherein the weighted value is used by the selection means when computing the value.” (emphasis added)

As understood by Applicants, U.S. Patent No. 5,918,222 to Fukui et al.

(hereinafter, merely "Fukui") relates to information disclosing apparatus that interactively discloses information as an agent of each individual owner who owns information. The apparatus further is capable of reflecting an intention of an information demander in management of a response history between the information disclosing apparatus and the information demander as a user. Additionally the apparatus is capable of dynamically analyzing the statuses of information demander and information provider who are users and selecting an appropriate countermeasure to both the information provider and the information demander.

Applicants submit that nothing has been found in Fukui to teach or suggest the above-identified features of claim 1.

Specifically, Applicants submit that Fukui does not disclose that said selection means selects the new topic by computing a value based on an association between the attributes of each piece of the first information and the attributes of the second information and selecting the first information with the greatest value as the new topic, or by reading a piece of the first information, computing the value based on the association between the attributes of the first information and the attributes of the second information, and selecting the first information as the new topic if the first information has a value greater than a threshold, as recited in claim 1. Therefore, claim 1 is believed to be patentable, wherein the attributes of the first information are weighted as a function of a relevance to the topic, and wherein the weighted value is used by the selection means when computing the value.

Independent claims 10 and 11 are corresponding method and recording medium claims, respectively, and are believed patentable for similar reasons.

III. DEPENDENT CLAIMS

The other claims in this application are each dependent from one of the independent claims discussed above and are therefore believed patentable for at least the same reasons. Since each dependent claim is also deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, however, the individual reconsideration of the patentability of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

In the event the Examiner disagrees with any of statements appearing above with respect to the disclosures in the cited reference, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner specifically indicate those portions of the reference providing the basis for a contrary view.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is believed that all of the claims in this application are patentable and Applicants respectfully request early passage to issue of the present application.

Please charge any additional fees that may be needed, and credit any overpayment, to our Deposit Account No. 50-0320.

Respectfully submitted,

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